



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 713**

February Session, 2008

Substitute House Bill No. 5786

*House of Representatives, April 23, 2008*

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. MERRILL of the 54th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING LOW-INCOME HEATING ASSISTANCE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (d) of section 16a-41a of the 2008 supplement  
2 to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in  
3 lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):

4 (d) [If funding allows, the Commissioner of Social Services, in  
5 consultation with the Secretary of the Office of Policy and  
6 Management, shall require that, each] Each community action agency  
7 administering a fuel assistance program shall begin accepting  
8 applications for the program not later than September first of each  
9 year.

10 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2008*) The Department of Social  
11 Services shall develop a plan for providing funds for weatherization  
12 projects for low-income households participating in the Connecticut  
13 energy assistance program, prioritizing assistance to households with  
14 incomes below two hundred per cent of the federal poverty level and

15 coordinating provision of assistance to maximize effectiveness of the  
16 funds with the weatherization assistance provided to low-income  
17 households administered by the municipal electric utility and public  
18 service utility companies in programs overseen by the Energy  
19 Conservation Management Board pursuant to sections 16-245m, 16-32f  
20 and 7-233y of the general statutes and the Fuel Oil Conservation Board  
21 pursuant to section 16a-22l of the 2008 supplement to the general  
22 statutes. No later than August 1, 2008, and at least forty-five days  
23 before implementation, the department shall submit said plan for  
24 expenditure of these funds to the Connecticut Energy Advisory Board,  
25 the Fuel Oil Conservation Board and the Energy Conservation  
26 Management Board for input and advice. The Energy Conservation  
27 Management Board may order modification of the plan to ensure  
28 effective prioritization and coordination of weatherization assistance in  
29 accordance with this section.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	16a-41a(d)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2008</i>	New section

**APP**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note****State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 09 \$	FY 10 \$
Department of Social Services	GF - Cost	350,000	350,000

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

This bill requires community action agencies to begin receiving applications for fuel assistance programs by September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Currently, the Department of Social Services (DSS) may require the agencies to do this if funding allows. It is expected that early intake for the fuel assistance programs will result in additional administrative costs of \$350,000 annually. sHB 5021 (the budget bill, as reported by the Appropriations Committee) contains \$350,000 for DSS to implement early intake. It is anticipated that the early enrollment will alleviate processing backlogs that have occurred in the program. It is not anticipated to result in additional benefit costs.

Section 2 of the bill further requires DSS to develop a plan for providing funds for weatherization projects for low income households. It is anticipated that DSS can develop this plan within normal administrative resources. The language of the bill does not require the expenditure of funds for this purpose. However, it should be noted that sHB 5021 contains \$1.9 million for DSS for low income weatherization projects.

**The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5786*****AN ACT CONCERNING LOW-INCOME HEATING ASSISTANCE.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) to develop a plan for funding weatherization projects for low-income households participating in the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP).

Under current law, DSS, in consultation with the Office of Policy and Management secretary, must order community action agencies administering fuel assistance programs to begin accepting applications by September 1 annually, if funding allows. The bill instead requires the agencies to do so, regardless of funding, without being directed by DSS.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008

**WEATHERIZATION PROJECTS**

The bill requires the DSS plan to give priority to helping households with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level. It must also coordinate the projects funded by the bill with existing weatherization programs. These existing programs are the utility-administered programs overseen by the Energy Conservation Management Board and the oil conservation programs administered by the Fuel Oil Conservation Board.

The bill requires DSS to submit its plan to these two boards and the Connecticut Energy Advisory Board for their input and advice. DSS must do so by August 1, 2008 and at least 45 days before the plan's implementation. The Energy Conservation Management Board may order modification of the plan to ensure effective prioritization and coordination of weatherization assistance.

**BACKGROUND*****Legislative History***

The House referred the bill (File 318) to the Appropriations Committee, which reported a substitute that eliminated a \$5.7 million appropriation to DSS in FY 09 for the weatherization projects.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 22 Nay 0 (03/11/2008)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 48 Nay 0 (04/14/2008)